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Level » Advanced

Style » Individual or group activities



Welcome to the Guardian Weekly's special news-based materials to support learners and teachers of English. Each month, the Guardian Weekly newspaper selects topical news articles that can be used to practise English language skills. The materials are graded for two levels: Advanced and Lower Intermediate. These worksheets can be downloaded free from guardian.co.uk/weekly/. You can also find more advice for teachers and learners from the Guardian Weekly's Learning English section on the site.

Materials prepared by Janet Hardy-Gould

British designer makes case for self-destruct syringes



Safe injections ... Marc Koska founder of the SafePoint charity

Before reading

1 Vocabulary from the article. Complete these definitions.

a If something **self**-destructs, it destroys ...

b If you **reuse** something, you use it ...

c If you are the **founder** of an organisation, you ...

d If you do something **undercover**, you do it ...

What is the general meaning of the prefixes and suffixes in bold?

Self-

re-

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-er

under-

- 2 Look at the headline, photo and caption of the article. Discuss the questions with a partner.
 - a What has Marc Koska designed?
 - b Why do you think this new product is needed?
 - c In which part of the world do you think this new product might be used? Why?

Article

British designer makes case for self-destruct syringes

- 1 Tanzania is to become the first country in the world to move exclusively to using syringes that self-destruct after a British entrepreneur showed the health minister undercover footage of children being injected with used needles.
- 2 Marc Koska, the designer of an auto-disable syringe and founder of a charity called SafePoint, went to the Tanzanian government with video of a nurse injecting a man who had HIV and syphilis with antibiotics - and then reusing the needle on a one-year-old baby.
- 3 "I went to see the minister of health in Tanzania and showed her the film. She was so distraught and said: What's the solution? Let's get on with it," Koska said.
- 4 Koska is a man on a mission. He hopes to persuade four other countries in east Africa to follow suit - Kenya, Uganda, Burundi and Rwanda - before he takes on the rest of the world.
- 5 The stakes are high. Some 1.3 million people die every year because of the reuse of syringes, according to the World Health Organisation.

- 6 In Africa, about 20m injections contaminated with HIV are given every year. In the developing world, every syringe is used on average four times. That's Russian roulette, Koska says.
- 7 The clearest evidence of danger is the gap between the numbers of injections and the numbers of imported needles. "Tanzania has 45 million people and they are importing 40m syringes. With an average of five injections each a year, they need 220m," he said.
- 8 Syringes are manufactured by a small number of big companies. They are reluctant to switch to making auto-disable syringes, which are now as cheap to make as conventional ones, because it involves changing the production process, which is expensive. Companies also sell fewer syringes in the long run - because people get well.
- 9 Koska has his own company, but his charity supports the use of any quality-assured brand of auto-disable syringe. Koska hopes to persuade families to demand safe injections from needles carrying a LifeSaver kitemark.
- 10 Koska tells of seeing parents asked to choose the needle to be used on their child from a tray of reused ones. If families understood the danger, they would insist on new, Koska believes.

Sarah Boseley

Glossary

footage (noun) part of a film showing a particular event or incident

distraught (adjective) extremely upset and anxious

reluctant (adjective) slow and unwilling to do something

kitemark (noun) an official mark, like a small kite, which shows that a product reaches a particular standard of quality and safety

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While reading

1 Read the first four paragraphs of the article. Complete the summary below with words from the text.

Self-destruct syringes will now be used in
 (a) [] after the
 (b) [] []
 viewed film of a (c) [] being
 injected by a (d) [] using a
 severely contaminated needle.
 The African country will be the (e)
 [] nation in the world to
 exclusively use this type of syringe and it is hoped
 that (f) [] more countries in
 (g) [] [] will
 follow its example.

2 Read the rest of the article. Complete the sentences.

a Every year, syringe reuse causes the death of ...

b Nurses in developing countries typically use
 each syringe ...

c The problem is shown by the gap between injections
 and the quantities of ...

d Companies say they don't make self-destruct
 syringes because it is expensive to ...

e Self-destruct syringes cost the same to produce as ...

f According to Koska, it's important for patients to ask
 for syringes with ...

g Sometimes families have to select a needle from ...

3 Work with a partner. Discuss the questions below with reference to the text.

a Did you know about any of the information in the text before reading?
 b Which part(s) of the text did you find particularly surprising or shocking? Why?

After reading

1 Look at these examples of the passive from the article.

... every syringe **is used** on average four times.
 (paragraph 6)

Syringes **are manufactured** by a small number of big companies. (paragraph 8)

... Koska tells of parents asked to choose the needle **to be used** on their child ... (paragraph 10)

Complete the summary with the correct form of the active or passive.

The SafePoint charity (a) []
 (found) in 2006 by Marc Koska to campaign for the right of people to (b) [] (inject) with safe and sterile needles. According to SafePoint, large numbers of people in the developing world (c) [] (receive) unsafe injections every year. The charity

(d) [] (estimate) that 17bn injections (e) [] (give) annually and 7bn of these (f) [] (be)

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unsafe because needles (g) []
(often reuse) a number of times. As a result, patients can (h) [] (infect) with serious diseases. For example, unsafe injections (i) [] (cause) 23m cases of hepatitis worldwide each year.

2 Look at these phrases from the text. What do they mean in this context?

- a** He hopes to persuade four other countries ... to follow suit. (paragraph 4)
- b** The stakes are high. Some 1.3 million people die every year ... (paragraph 5)
- c** ... every syringe is used ... four times. That's Russian roulette ... (paragraph 6)

Why do you think the journalist has used these phrases in the article? Discuss your ideas with a partner.

Activity - writing a profile

Research and write a profile of inventor Marc Koska. Read back through the article to find useful vocabulary and information about him. Then look at marckoska.com and safepointtrust.org to find further details.

Include in your profile:

- a** His background and reasons for inventing the self-destruct syringe.
- b** The process that resulted in the invention.
- c** His success in persuading people to adopt the syringe.
- d** His plans for the product in the future.

Profile: Marc Koska



A portrait of a man with dark, wavy hair and a serious expression, wearing a black collared shirt. He is positioned in the upper-left corner of the page. The rest of the page features horizontal black lines spaced evenly down the page, intended for handwritten notes.

Answers

Before reading

1 **a** itself. **b** again. **c** started it. **d** secretly. **e** working.
self- used in nouns, adjectives and verbs to indicate to or by itself/yourself eg self-portrait, self-educated, self-harm.
re- used in verbs to mean again eg rebuild.
-er (-or) added to verbs to create nouns which refer to a person who does the thing described by the verb eg designer, actor.
under- used in nouns and adjectives to indicate below or beneath eg undercoat.

While reading

1a Tanzania **b** health minister **c** baby **d** nurse **e** first **f** four **g** east Africa

2 a 1.3 million people. **b** four times. **c** imported needles. **d** change the production process. **e** conventional ones. **f** a LifeSaver kitemark, g a tray of reused ones.

After reading

1a was founded **b** be injected **c** receive **d** estimates **e** are given **f** are **g** are often reused **h** be infected **i** cause

2a To act in the same way as the country of Tanzania. **b** People risk losing a lot. In this case, their lives. **c** The reuse of needles is like the game of Russian roulette where people risk killing themselves by firing a partially loaded gun at their head. The phrases are related to cards or gambling. This conveys the idea that receiving a safe injection can be a matter of chance.